



Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) Grant Opportunity Guidelines

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| Opening date: | 6 January 2020 |
| Closing date and time: | 11:00 pm AEDT on 17 February 2020 |
| Commonwealth policy entity: | Department of Veterans' Affairs |
| Administering entity | Community Grants Hub |
| Enquiries: | If you have any questions, contact Community Grants Hub Phone: 1800 020 283 (option 1) Email: support@communitygrants.gov.au Questions should be sent no later than 5:00 pm AEDT on 10 February 2020 |
| Date guidelines released: | 6 January 2020 |
| Type of grant opportunity: | Targeted non-competitive |

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1. Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST): grant processes

The Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) program is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives.

This grant opportunity is part of the above grant program, which contributes to the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Outcome 1.4 - Assistance and Other Compensation for Veterans and Dependents. The Department of Veterans' Affairs works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017 \(CGRGs\)](#).



The grant opportunity opens

We publish the grant guidelines on [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.



You complete and submit a grant application

You complete the application form and address all of the eligibility to be considered for a grant.



We assess all grant applications

We assess the applications against eligibility criteria and notify you if you are not eligible. If you are eligible, we then assess your eligible application and overall consideration of value with money using a formula that calculates each organisation's workload as a percentage of the work undertaken nationally in the previous (2019) calendar year. This percentage is then applied to the available BEST monies to calculate each eligible applicant's grant offer.



We make grant recommendations

We provide advice, through the Selection Advisory Panel to the decision maker on the merits of each application.



Grant decisions are made

The decision maker (Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel) decides which applications are successful.



We notify you of the outcome

We advise you of the outcome of your application. We may not notify unsuccessful applicants until grant agreements have been executed with successful applicants.



We enter into a grant agreement

We enter into a grant agreement with you if successful. The type of grant agreement is based on the nature or complexity of the grant and will be proportional to the risks involved.



Delivery of grant

You undertake the grant activity as set out in your grant agreement. We manage the grant by working with you, monitoring your progress and making payments.



Evaluation of the Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) program

We evaluate your specific grant activity and the Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) program as a whole. We base this on information you provide us and that we collect from various sources.

1.1 Introduction

These guidelines contain information for the Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) program.

You must read these guidelines before filling out an application.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant program/grant opportunity
- the eligibility criteria
- how grant applications are considered and selected
- how grantees are notified and receive grant payments
- how grantees will be monitored and evaluated
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

This grant opportunity and process will be administered by the Community Grants Hub on behalf of the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

2. About the grant program

The Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) program forms part of the Government's commitment to support the role of ex-service organisation (ESO) pension and welfare practitioners and advocates, who provide advice and assistance to the veteran and defence communities. It also links closely to the [Advocacy Training and Development Program \(ATDP\)](#), which provides the essential skills for claims, advocacy and welfare work.

The program will run over one year in the 2020-21 financial year.

The program is funded through the Department of Veterans' Affairs' Outcome 1.4 - Assistance and Other Compensation for Veterans and Dependants program, and the Payments to Ex-Service Organisations (ESOs) sub-program.

The program is intended to assist the veteran and defence communities by providing support and resources to ESO practitioners for pensions, advocacy and/or welfare work. It assists ESOs by providing a contribution to the work of these practitioners. It does not fully fund an organisation.

Grants under this grant opportunity must assist in meeting the objectives and outcomes of the program.

The objectives of the program are to assist ESOs to:

- improve the quality of claims received by DVA at the primary determining level
- reduce the rate of appeals to the Veterans' Review Board (VRB) and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT)
- promote the provision of welfare services to the veteran and defence community.

The intended outcomes of the program are to ensure:

- the veteran and defence communities are able to benefit from having better informed ESO practitioners who can ensure claims lodged with DVA are of a high standard and contain all required information to enable timely and quality decisions
- ESO practitioners will assist in improving claims assessment efficiency
- the veteran and defence communities will have access to appropriate compensation and welfare advocacy services.

The Community Grants Hub administers the program according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017 \(CGRGs\)](#).

3. Grant amount and grant period

3.1 Grants available

A total of \$4.205 million GST exclusive is available for the 2020-21 financial year for the Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) program.

The grant amount available for each organisation will be determined on the basis of the total funds available and the workload information provided in your application (see Section 7.2 for more information).

3.2 Grant period

The maximum grant period is one year.

4. Eligibility criteria

4.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

Definition of a bona fide ESO

For the purposes of BEST grants, a bona fide ESO is considered to be an organisation:

- whose membership consists primarily of Australian veterans, past and present members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and/or their dependants
- which is established primarily to provide pensions, advocacy and/or welfare assistance to Australian veterans, past and present members of the ADF and/or their dependants
- which does not operate as a business or charge any fee for acting on behalf of the Australian veterans, past and present members of the ADF and/or their dependants in the provision of claims or welfare services.

Applicant types

ESOs can choose to apply as one of two applicant types:

- 1) An ESO applying in their own right for funding for their own organisation.
- 2) An organisation applying for funding as a sponsoring applicant on behalf of one or more ESOs that may or may not be an eligible entity type.

Applying in your own right

To be eligible to apply in your own right, you must be:

- a bona fide ESO
- one of the following eligible entity types:
 - Company¹
 - Cooperative

¹ Company is a company incorporated under the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth).

- Corporate State or Territory Entity
- Incorporated Association
- Indigenous Corporation
- Partnership²
- Statutory Entity.

If you are applying as a Trustee on behalf of a Trust³, the Trustee must have an eligible entity type as listed above.

Applying as a sponsoring applicant

Whether or not an ESO meets the eligibility criteria to apply for funding in their own right, another organisation may apply as a sponsor on their behalf. Funding is managed by the sponsoring applicant but any recommended grant amount will be assessed on the basis of the sponsored organisation's activity as provided in the application. A sponsoring applicant may apply on behalf of more than one ESO.

To be eligible, a sponsoring applicant must be one of the following eligible entity types:

- Company
- Cooperative
- Corporate State or Territory Entity
- Incorporated Association
- Indigenous Corporation
- Partnership
- Statutory Entity.

Responsibilities of a sponsoring applicant

The sponsoring applicant's responsibilities are to:

- bear executive management responsibility and be accountable to the DVA for the appropriate use of grant funds by the sponsored organisation in accordance with the terms of the grant
- take responsibility for the receipt and distribution of grant funds
- take responsibility for the collection, collation and provision of all audit, reporting and acquittal documentation for the grant.

The sponsoring applicant must submit a separate grant application for each sponsored organisation.

4.2 Additional eligibility requirements

To be considered for a grant, you must also meet the following:

- the amount requested must be for eligible grant activities and items as outlined at Sections 5.1, 5.2 and Appendix A

² Partnership – the individual partners will enter into the Agreement with the agency. A Partnership Agreement or a list of all individual partners of the partnership may be requested.

³ Trusts are not legal entities in their own right – to be eligible, only the Trustee for the Trust can apply by providing the signed Trust Deed and any subsequent variations with the application form. Both the Trust's and Trustee's details will be collected in the application form.

- all identified workload is undertaken by practitioners with up-to-date ATDP or Training and Information Program (TIP) training
- all previous DVA grants have been acquitted (if applicable). We cannot fund applications from an organisation that has outstanding acquittals for any previous DVA grant funding.

4.3 Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?

Applying in your own right

You are not eligible to apply in your own right if you:

- are not a bona fide ESO
- receive funding from another government source that will entirely meet the costs of the project proposed under this grant opportunity⁴
- are one of the following entity types:
 - Corporate Commonwealth Entity
 - Non-corporate Commonwealth Entity
 - Non-corporate Commonwealth Statutory Authority
 - Commonwealth Company
 - Non-corporate State or Territory Entity
 - Non-corporate State or Territory Statutory Authority
 - Local Government⁵
 - International Entity
 - Sole Trader
 - Person⁶
 - Unincorporated Association.

Applying as a sponsoring applicant

You are not eligible to apply as a sponsoring applicant if:

- the sponsored organisation is not a bona fide ESO
- the sponsored organisation receives funding from another government source that will entirely meet the costs of the project proposed under this grant opportunity.
- are one of the following entity types:
 - Corporate Commonwealth Entity
 - Non-corporate Commonwealth Entity
 - Non-corporate Commonwealth Statutory Authority
 - Commonwealth Company
 - Non-corporate State or Territory Entity
 - Non-corporate State or Territory Statutory Authority

⁴ You may be contacted to provide further information on any items funded for the same purpose as the project proposed under this granting opportunity.

⁵ Includes New South Wales local governments created as Body Politics.

⁶ A person is a natural person, an individual, a human being.

- Local Government
- International Entity
- Sole Trader
- Person
- Unincorporated Association.

5. What the grant money can be used for

5.1 Eligible grant activities

The program funding is available to support the work of military compensation advocates, welfare advocates, welfare support officers and administrative assistants supporting that work.

Military Compensation Advocates

A military compensation advocate assists veteran and defence community members and their dependants to prepare and lodge compensation and benefits claims with the DVA.

Advocates must either be obtaining and/or maintaining appropriate levels of training under the ATDP or hold Level 3 or 4 qualifications under TIP. They must also be accredited by their ESO.

Military compensation advocates with higher level training may also be involved in preparing cases for review before the VRB and/or the AAT.

Welfare Advocates

A welfare advocate provides veteran and defence community members with information on, and assists with, access to health, housing and other community services and benefits. A welfare advocate officer must also be obtaining and/or maintaining appropriate levels of training under the ATDP or have previous qualifications under TIP and be accredited by their ESO.

ESOs requesting a BEST grant must provide workload statistics for paid and volunteer advocates for the previous (2019) calendar year. These workload statistics provide the basis for calculating grant offers.

Welfare Support Officers

A welfare support officer provides companionship to veterans, makes home and hospital visits, and undertakes other non-advisory support tasks.

Administrative Assistants

An administrative assistant provides general secretarial and administrative assistance and/or office management services to support the work of compensation and welfare advocates and welfare support officers.

5.2 Eligible expenditure

You can only spend the grant on eligible expenditure you have incurred on eligible grant activities. Further detail is provided at Appendix A.

Grant assistance is available for two categories of expenses incurred by ESOs undertaking compensation and welfare work:

- salary assistance
- equipment and administrative expenses assistance.

These categories are outlined below:

Salary Assistance

BEST salary assistance is provided as a contribution to the salary of full-time and part-time military compensation advocates who help you with claims for compensation or benefits. Salary assistance is also available as a contribution to the salary of administrative officers who support advocates undertaking military compensation work.

Military compensation work consists of the following claim types:

- primary level DVA pension claims
- successful Veterans' Entitlement Act Section 31 Review applications
- review applications to the VRB
- reconsiderations under the Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation Act (SRCA) or the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act (MRCA)
- appeals to the AAT.

Each ESO is responsible for determining how it remunerates its paid practitioners.

Equipment and Administrative Expense Assistance

BEST administrative expense grants are provided to assist with the purchase, and ongoing expense, of capital equipment, office consumables and local travel (calculate local travel by multiplying total local kilometres travelled by 36 cents).

Unlike salary assistance, grants to support administrative expenses are available for items supporting compensation and/or welfare work. Grants for these items will therefore be calculated based on an organisation's compensation AND welfare workload.

Eligible Equipment Items

BEST funding is available as a contribution to expenses which can be shown to be directly related to the support required by pension and welfare practitioners and advocates in providing advice to the veteran and defence communities.

Examples of expenses that would be eligible for BEST funding include:

- answering machines, bookcases, brochure holders, chairs, tables
- filing cabinets, compactus
- computer hardware, scanners, tablets, appropriate computer software
- white boards, printing and printer supplies.

For further guidance on eligible expenditure, see Appendix A.

For more information on eligible and ineligible expenditure, see Appendix A. We may update the guidelines on eligible and ineligible expenditure from time to time. If your application is successful, the version in place when your grant agreement takes effect will be the version that applies to your project.

5.3 What the grant money cannot be used for

You cannot use the grant for employee on-costs such as superannuation, leave entitlements, redundancy payments or other salary related expenses.

Examples of administrative expenses which would **not be eligible** for funding include:

- honoraria

- utility costs covering electricity, gas, water, etc.
- the cost of leasing premises (including rent) or purchase of property
- council rates
- office expenses and fees including insurance, advertising expenses, audit fees and bank fees
- any travel costs beyond the local district where the organisation operates or has its usual place of business
- legal consultation costs, including litigation
- air conditioning units, televisions or refrigerators.

Further detail is provided at Appendix A.

6. How to apply

Before applying, you must read and understand these guidelines, the terms and conditions, sample grant agreement, and questions and answers.

These documents are found at [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites. Any changes to grant documentation are published on both sites and addenda⁷ will be published on GrantConnect. By registering on this website, you will be automatically notified of any changes. GrantConnect is the authoritative source for grants information.

Please note the requirements specific to each applicant type:

Applicant in your own right

If you submit more than one application in your own right, the latest accepted application form will progress. If you are applying in your own right you can also apply as a sponsoring applicant. A separate form is required for each type of application. The same type of application form can be used for either type of application, you just need to nominate in what capacity you are applying.

Sponsoring Applicant

The sponsoring applicant must pass on the full value of the grant to the sponsored organisation.

If you are applying as a sponsoring applicant, you can also apply as an applicant in your own right.

The sponsoring applicant must submit a separate grant application for each sponsored organisation.

To apply you must:

- complete the online application form on [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#).
- provide all the information requested
- address all eligibility criteria
- include all necessary attachments
- submit your application/s to the Community Grants Hub by 11:00 pm AEDT on 17 February 2020.

We will not provide application forms or accept applications for this grant opportunity by fax or mail.

The application form includes help information. You are responsible for making sure your application is complete and accurate. Please note that the workload information in the form is essential to the accurate calculation of grant amounts. Giving false or misleading information is a

⁷ Alterations and addenda include but are not limited to: corrections to currently published documents, changes to close times for applications, questions and answer documents.

serious offence under the [Criminal Code 1995](#) and we will investigate any false or misleading information and may exclude your application from further consideration.

If you need more help about the application process, submitting an application online, have any technical difficulties or find an error in your application after submission, but before the closing date and time, you should contact the Community Grants Hub immediately on 1800 020 283 (option 1) or email support@communitygrants.gov.au. The Community Grants Hub does not have to accept any additional information after the closing time.

If we find an error or something missing, we may ask you for clarification or additional information. This will not change the nature of your application. However, we can refuse to accept any additional information from you that would change your application after the closing time.

You should keep a copy of your application and any supporting documents.

You will receive an automated notification acknowledging the receipt of your application.

6.1 Attachments to the application

If you are applying as a sponsoring applicant, the following supporting document must be attached to your application. Templates are provided for your use with the grant opportunity documents as specified:

- Letter of Declaration confirming sponsorship – **mandatory** template provided. This is to be completed by the sponsored organisation and signed by both the sponsored organisation and sponsoring applicant demonstrating that BOTH organisations are aware of, and agree to, the arrangement.
- Practitioner List – **optional** template provided for use if additional space is required to answer the question in the application form.

If a mandatory template is not used your application will be considered non-compliant and will not proceed to assessment.

You must attach supporting documentation according to the instructions provided within the application form. You should only attach requested documents. We will not consider information in attachments we have not asked for.

Please note: There is a 2mb limit for each attachment.

6.2 Timing of grant opportunity processes

You must submit an application between the published opening and closing dates.

Late applications

We will not accept late applications unless you have experienced exceptional circumstances that prevent the submission of the application. Broadly, exceptional circumstances are events characterised by one or more of the following:

- reasonably unforeseeable
- beyond your control
- unable to be managed or resolved within the application period.

Exceptional circumstances will be considered on their merits and in accordance with probity principles.

How to lodge a late application

Applicants seeking to submit a late application will be required to submit a late application request to the Community Grants Hub. The request should include a detailed explanation of the circumstances that prevented the application being submitted prior to the closing time. Where appropriate, supporting evidence should be provided to verify the claim of exceptional circumstances.

The late application request form and instructions for how to submit it can be found on the [Community Grants Hub website](#).

Requests for a late application must be made within three days of the grant opportunity closing, unless otherwise specified in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

The Delegate or their appointed representative⁸ will determine whether a late application will be accepted. The decision of the delegate will be final and not be subject to a review or appeals process.

Once the outcome is determined, the Community Grants Hub will advise you if the request is accepted or declined.

Expected timing for this grant opportunity

If you are successful, you will be expected to start your project around 1 July 2020.

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

| Activity | Timeframe |
|---|---|
| Application period | 6 January 2020 to 11:00 pm AEDT on 17 February 2020 |
| Assessment of applications | 3-4 weeks |
| Approval of outcomes of selection process | 6-7 weeks from completed assessment |
| Notification to unsuccessful applicants | 1-2 weeks from approval |
| Commence grant agreement negotiations | 2 weeks from notification to successful applicants |
| Earliest start date of grant activity | 1 July 2020 |
| End date of grant activity | 30 June 2021 |

6.3 Questions during the application process

If you have any questions during the application period, contact the Community Grants Hub on 1800 020 283 (option 1) or email support@communitygrants.gov.au.

The Community Grants Hub will respond to emailed questions within five working days. Answers to questions are posted on the [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.

The question period will close at 5:00 pm AEDT on 10 February 2020. Following this time, only questions about using and/or submitting the application form will be answered.

⁸ This may be the Community Grants Hub Delegate or nominated staff member of the Department of Veterans' Affairs at the EL2 level or above.

7. The grant selection process

7.1 Assessment of grant applications

The Assessment Centre will review your application against the eligibility criteria. Only eligible and compliant applications will move to the next stage. Eligible applications will be considered through a targeted non-competitive grant process. If eligible, the Assessment Centre will apply the funding formula to your application.

There is **one (1)** BEST funding round each year.

Grants are not guaranteed in any year. An ESO should not consider that any funding received is ongoing or indicates a likely outcome for subsequent applications. All applicants must reapply for funding in each funding round.

The grant amount offered to each eligible applicant will be calculated using a formula, which has been determined in conjunction with the ESO community, through the ESO Round Table (ESORT).

This formula is applied uniformly to all eligible applicants. As long as an organisation meets the eligibility criteria their application will be considered.

The formula takes into account:

- the amount of salary and administrative grant funding requested
- compensation and welfare workload information provided in the completed grant application
- the total amount of funding available for the grant funding round
- the total number of eligible applicants.

7.2 Grant calculation

The grant amount offered to eligible applicants is calculated based on:

- an applicant's requested grant amount and workload information provided in the completed grant application
- the total amount of funding available
- the BEST grant calculation formula.

A comparative analysis is made of all eligible applications and grant offers determined by applying the grant calculation formula to each applicant's workload statistics.

The formula calculates each organisation's workload as a percentage of the work undertaken nationally in the previous calendar year. This percentage is then applied to the available BEST monies to calculate each eligible applicant's grant offer.

As the formula is based on workload, it provides a transparent, equitable, and repeatable way to calculate grants. The formula is reviewed on a regular basis in conjunction with relevant stakeholders to ensure that the funding provided continues to meet the needs of ESOs and the veteran and defence communities as well as aligning with overall government objectives.

The workload formula and how it is applied is explained in detail at Appendix B.

7.3 Who will assess and select applications?

The Assessment Centre will apply the grant funding formula to each eligible and compliant application. The Assessment Centre will be made up of Community Grants Hub staff, who will undertake training to ensure consistent assessment of all applications. The outcome of the Assessment Centre calculations will inform the deliberations of the Selection Advisory Panel.

Any expert/advisor, who is not a Commonwealth Official, will be required/expected to perform their duties in accordance with the CGRGs.

The Selection Advisory Panel, comprised of Department of Veterans' Affairs staff, will assess whether the applications represent value with money and will make final recommendations to the decision maker. The Selection Advisory Panel may seek additional information about you or your application, which may delay completion of the selection process. This may be done from within the Commonwealth, even if the sources are not nominated by you as referees. The Selection Advisory Panel may also consider information about you or your application that is available through the normal course of business.

The Selection Advisory Panel will make recommendations in regards to the:

- overall objectives for the program
- conformance with eligibility criteria
- outcome of the application of the grant calculation formula.

The Selection Advisory Panel recommends to the decision maker which applications to approve for a grant.

7.4 Who will approve grants?

The Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel (the decision maker) decides which grants to approve based on the recommendations of the Selection Advisory Panel and the availability of grant funds for the purposes of the grant program.

The decision maker's decision is final in all matters, including the:

- approval of the grant
- grant funding amount to be awarded
- terms and conditions of the grant.

There is no appeal mechanism for decisions to approve or not approve a grant.

As the overall amount applied for is often in excess of the available grant funds, the calculation formula may result in some applications being approved for a reduced amount.

8. Notification of application outcomes

We will write to you about the outcome of your application. If you are successful, you will be advised of any specific conditions attached to the grant.

8.1 Feedback on your application

A feedback summary will be published on the Community Grants Hub website to provide all organisations with easy to access to information about the grant selection process and the main strengths and areas for improving applications.

Individual feedback will be available if requested by the applicant. The process for requesting individual feedback will be included in the letter advising of the outcome of your application.

9. Successful grant applications

9.1 The grant agreement

You must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth. We will offer successful applicants a Letter of Agreement or a Commonwealth Simple Grant Agreement for this grant opportunity.

We have introduced streamlined grant agreements and grantee obligations to reduce the administrative impost on grantees.

We use two types of grant agreements for this grant opportunity. The type of agreement offered will depend on the associated risks and complexity of your project.

Each agreement has general/standard grant conditions that cannot be changed. Sample grant agreements are available on GrantConnect and Community Grants Hub websites as part of the grant documentation. We will use a schedule to outline the specific grant requirements.

We must execute a grant agreement with you before we can make any payments. We are not responsible for any of your expenditure until a grant agreement is executed.

Your grant agreement may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the decision maker. These are identified in the agreement.

The Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the grant agreement.

Letter of Agreement

This grant agreement comprises the Letter of Agreement and the corresponding grant conditions if applicable.

We will send you a Letter of Agreement providing you with an offer. You accept the offer by signing and returning the Letter of Agreement to us by the date stipulated in the Letter of Agreement. The agreement is not considered to be executed until both you and the Commonwealth have signed the agreement.

Commonwealth Simple Grant Agreement

You will have fifteen (15) business days from the date of a written offer to sign and return this grant agreement. The agreement is not considered to be executed until both you and the Commonwealth have signed the agreement. During this time, we will work with you to finalise details.

The offer may lapse if both parties do not sign the grant agreement within this time. Under certain circumstances, we may extend this period. We base the approval of your grant on the information you provide in your application.

The agreement will also note that:

- funds cannot be used for purposes other than those specified in the agreement
- unspent funds must be returned to the DVA within a reasonable time and in line with the set acquittal period for expending grant funds
- you must ensure that all advocates have professional indemnity insurance available through the Veterans' Indemnity and Training Association Inc. (VITA), or a similar insurance provider
- the grantee should ensure that practitioners in its organisation and organisations it may be sponsoring will:
 - undertake the appropriate levels of ATDP training, or hold appropriate qualifications under TIP

- abide by the ATDP Code of Conduct.
- DVA may request information from you regarding practitioners providing advocacy services for your organisation.

9.2 Specific legislation, policies and industry standards

Whilst you are required to be compliant with all relevant laws and regulations, you will be requested to demonstrate compliance with the industry standard requiring all advocates to be provided with professional indemnity insurance cover:

The VITA has advised that they will not offer professional indemnity insurance for TIP trained advocates who are not undertaking or maintaining ATDP accreditation, before 30 June 2019 for Level 1 and 2 advocates, and before 31 December 2021 for Levels 3 and 4 advocates.

Therefore, to be eligible for a grant, you must declare in your application if you comply with these requirements. In particular, you will be asked to provide advice about how advocates operating with your organisation will receive professional indemnity insurance cover. You may need to declare you can meet these requirements in your grant agreement with the Commonwealth.

9.3 How we pay the grant

The grant agreement will state the maximum grant amount to be paid.

We will not exceed the maximum grant amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra costs, you must meet them yourself.

The grant agreement will state the timing of the payment.

We may pay 100 percent of the grant on execution of the grant agreement. You may be required to report how you spent the grant funds at the completion of the project/services.

9.4 Grant payments and GST

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) advises that DVA grants are considered a Financial Assistance Payment and so they are not subject to GST. In accordance with that advice:

Organisations registered for GST

- are required to calculate the GST-exclusive component of the cost of any item or service purchased for their proposed project
- provide the final total GST exclusive amount in their grant application
- can claim an input tax credit through their BAS Statement to the ATO, for the GST component of purchased items or services.

Organisations NOT registered for GST

- are not able to request an input tax credit from the ATO for the GST component of purchased items or services
- are required to provide the final GST inclusive amount in their grant application.

If you have any queries in relation to the transactions you enter into with third parties as a result of a grant received under the BEST program, you may wish to speak with the ATO or your financial advisor about the effect of receiving a grant before you enter into a grant agreement. You can also visit the Australian Taxation Office website for more information.

Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. We recommend you seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations or seek

assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#). We do not provide advice on your particular taxation circumstances.

Please Note: If you are sponsoring an organisation that is registered for GST, provide the GST exclusive amounts for requested expenditure. If you are sponsoring an organisation that is not registered for GST, please provide the GST inclusive amounts.

10. Announcement of grants

If successful, your grant will be listed on the GrantConnect website 21 calendar days after the date of effect as required by Section 5.3 of the [CGRGs](#).

11. How we monitor your grant activity

You must ensure that all BEST funded equipment is:

- used primarily for pensions and/or welfare work
- secured in a suitable and safe manner
- configured to ensure the confidentiality of any client information or files stored on or in that equipment
- insured by the grantee
- listed on an equipment register which is available to the DVA on request.

After the grant period, any capital equipment purchased under the funding agreement belongs to the ESO. The ESO is responsible for this equipment, any ancillary operational costs, and any ongoing costs or repairs to that equipment.

You will also be responsible for:

- meeting the terms and conditions of the grant agreement and managing the activity efficiently and effectively
- complying with record keeping, reporting and acquittal requirements as set out in the grant agreement
- participating in any grant program evaluation where specified in the grant agreement.

11.1 Keeping us informed

You should let us know if anything is likely to affect your project or organisation.

We need to know of any changes to your organisation or its business activities, particularly if they affect your ability to complete your grant, carry on business and pay debts due because of these changes.

You must also inform us of any changes to your:

- name
- addresses
- nominated contact details
- bank account details.

If you become aware of a breach of the terms and conditions under the grant agreement, you must contact us immediately.

11.2 Reporting

BEST grants funding may be issued under a Letter of Agreement or a Commonwealth Simple Grant Agreement.

When we use a Commonwealth Simple Grant Agreement, you must submit reports in line with the grant agreement. You may be required to report on:

- progress against agreed project
- expenditure of the grant

The amount of detail you provide in your reports should be relative to the size and complexity of the grant and the grant amount.

Other Reports

Any reports you are required to provide will be outlined in your grant agreement. You may be required to provide an expenditure report in regard to an initial payment and/or a final report at the end of the grant agreement period. You may also be required to provide a report regarding the practitioners providing advocacy services for your organisation.

Other Reports - Expenditure Report

You may be required to provide an expenditure report. An expenditure report must include evidence that the amount of the grant received to date has been spent in accordance with the grant project.

You must discuss any reporting delays with us as soon as you become aware of them.

Other Reports - Final Report

Final reports may require you to:

- include evidence of your completion of agreed activities and outcomes
- show the total eligible expenditure incurred to date

The final report must be submitted by the report due date stipulated in your grant agreement.

You must tell us of any reporting delays with us as soon as you become aware of them.

11.3 Financial declaration or Non-audited financial acquittal

Depending on the grant agreement in place, we may ask you to provide a financial declaration that the grant money was spent in accordance with the grant agreement and to report on any underspends of the grant money.

Alternatively, we may ask you to provide a non-audited financial acquittal report. A financial acquittal report will verify that you spent the grant in accordance with the grant agreement.

11.4 Grant agreement variations

We recognise that unexpected events may affect your progress. In these circumstances, you can request a variation to your grant agreement. You can request a variation by contacting your Funding Arrangement Manager at the Community Grants Hub.

You should not assume that a variation request will be successful. We will consider your request based on provisions in the grant agreement and the likely impact on achieving outcomes.

11.5 Compliance visits

We may visit you during or at the completion of your grant activity to review your compliance with the grant agreement. We will provide you with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.

11.6 Record keeping

We may also inspect the records you are required to keep under the grant agreement.

All ESOs that receive BEST funding are required to record and maintain information supporting the details they provide on their application and their use and expenditure of grant funds.

This information must be made available upon request from the DVA. It may be required for the purposes of acquittal of the BEST funds and/or departmental or external audit or evaluation of the BEST program.

The information required will depend on the components of the grant, but may include:

- records detailing the individual compensation cases and welfare work referred to on the application form
- an Equipment Register for all capital equipment purchases funded under the grant
- a Travel Log for all travel expenses claimed and funded under the grant
- invoices, receipts or other information for capital equipment purchases
- invoices, receipts or other information for any office consumables where the single purchase was \$100 or more
- if salary assistance is provided, evidence of who has been paid, the number of hours worked and in respect of what activities
- any additional information outlined in the grant agreement.

11.7 Evaluation

We will evaluate the Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) grant opportunity to see how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. We may use information from your application and reports for this purpose. We may also ask you for more information to help us understand how the grant impacted you and to evaluate how effective the program was in achieving its outcomes.

11.8 Acknowledgement

If you make a public statement about a project funded under the program, we require you to acknowledge the grant by using the following:

‘This project received grant funding from the Australian Government.’

12. Probity

The Australian Government will make sure that the grant opportunity process is fair, according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRGs.

These guidelines may be changed by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. When this happens, the revised guidelines are published on [GrantConnect](#) and the [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.

12.1 Enquiries and feedback

Complaints about this grant opportunity

The [Department of Veterans' Affairs Feedback Management Policy](#) applies to complaints about this grant opportunity. All complaints about this grant opportunity, including grant decisions, must be made in writing.

Any questions you have about grant decisions for this grant opportunity should be sent to support@communitygrants.gov.au.

Complaints about the selection process

You can contact the complaints service with complaints about the Community Grants Hub's service(s) or the selection process.

Details of what makes an eligible complaint can be provided by asking the Community Grants Hub. You can use the complaints form on the Department of Social Services website, by phone or mail.

Phone: 1800 634 035

Email: complaints@dss.gov.au

Mail: DSS Feedback, Complaints
GPO Box 9820
Canberra ACT 2601

Complaints to the Ombudsman

If you do not agree with the way the Community Grants Hub or the Department of Veterans' Affairs has handled your complaint, you may complain to the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#). The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the Community Grants Hub or the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072
Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au
Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

12.2 Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant opportunity or program. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Community Grants Hub staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel has a:

- professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer
- relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict you from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently
- relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the grant program/grant opportunity.

You will be asked to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you think there is an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Community Grants Hub in writing immediately.

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff will be handled as set out in the Australian [Public Service Code of Conduct \(Section 13\(7\)\)](#) of the [Public Service Act 1999](#). Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

We publish our conflict of interest policy on the [Community Grants Hub](#) website.

12.3 Privacy

We treat your personal information according to the [Privacy Act 1988](#) and the [Australian Privacy Principles](#). This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- who we give your personal information to.

Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone else for the primary purpose for which it was collected, unless an exemption applies.

The Australian Government may also use and give out information about grant applicants and grant recipients under this grant opportunity in any other Australian Government business or function. This includes disclosing grant information on GrantConnect as required for reporting purposes and giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

We may share the information you give us with other Commonwealth entities for purposes including government administration, research or service delivery, according to Australian laws.

As part of your application, you declare your ability to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the Australian Privacy Principles and impose the same privacy obligations on officers, employees, agents and subcontractors that you engage to assist with the activity, in respect of personal information you collect, use, store, or disclose in connection with the activity. Accordingly, you must not do anything, which if done by the Department of Veterans' Affairs would breach an Australian Privacy Principle as defined in the Act.

12.4 Confidential information

Other than information available in the public domain, you agree not to give out to any person, other than us, any confidential information relating to the grant application and/or agreement, without our prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where you are required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

We may at any time, require you to arrange for you, or your employees, agents or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to nondisclosure of our confidential information in a form we consider acceptable.

We will keep any information in connection with the grant agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all of the three conditions below:

1. you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
2. the information is commercially sensitive

3. revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else.

We will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- Commonwealth employees and contractors to help us manage the program effectively
- employees and contractors of our department so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government agencies in program reports and consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

The grant agreement may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the grant agreement.

12.5 Freedom of information

All documents that the Australian Government has, including those about this grant opportunity, are subject to the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#) (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act gives people the ability to get information held by the Australian Government and its organisations. Under the FOI Act, people can ask for documents the Australian Government has. People may not be able to get these documents if these documents need to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons who the information relates to.

All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator in writing.

By mail: Freedom of Information Team
 Government and Executive Services Branch
 Department of Social Services (DSS)
 GPO Box 9820
 Canberra ACT 2601

By email: foi@dss.gov.au

13. Glossary

| Term | Definition |
|--|---|
| accountable authority | see subsection 12(2) of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 |
| administering entity | when an entity that is not responsible for the policy, is responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes. |
| ATDP | Advocacy Training and Development Program. It provides training in Military Advocacy, for members of Ex-Service Organisations (ESOs) which offer advocacy services to serving and ex-serving members of the armed forces and their dependants. |
| commencement date | the expected start date for the grant activity. |
| completion date | the expected date that the grant activity must be completed and the grant spent by. |
| Commonwealth entity | a Department of State, or a Parliamentary Department, or a listed entity or a body corporate established by a law of the Commonwealth. See subsections 10(1) and (2) of the PGPA Act. |
| Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs) | establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration. |
| date of effect | can be the date on which a grant agreement is signed or a specified starting date. Where there is no grant agreement, entities must publish information on individual grants as soon as practicable. |
| decision maker | the person who makes a decision to award a grant |
| eligibility criteria | refer to the mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility criteria. |
| ESO | Ex-Service Organisation – a volunteer organisation established to support serving and ex-serving members of the defence forces and their dependents. |
| ESO Practitioner | Refers to both Military Compensation and Welfare Advocates. |

| Term | Definition |
|------------------------------|---|
| ESORT | <p>Ex-Service Organisation Round Table.</p> <p>This forum comprises senior representatives of the Repatriation Commission, Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission and ESOs. The Forum is intended to enhance the capacity of the Commissions to address issues of strategic importance to the ex-service and defence communities and assist in setting strategic directions for the medium to long term.</p> |
| Funding Arrangement Manager | is the officer responsible for the ongoing management of the grantee and their compliance with the grant agreement. |
| grant | <p>for the purposes of the CGRGs, a 'grant' is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. under which relevant money⁹ or other Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) money¹⁰ is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives. |
| grant activity/activities | refers to the project/tasks/services that the grantee is required to undertake. |
| grant agreement | sets out the relationship between the parties to the agreement, and specifies the details of the grant. |
| GrantConnect | is the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRGs. |
| grant opportunity | refers to the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted, and will reflect the relevant grant selection process. |
| grant program | a 'program' carries its natural meaning and is intended to cover a potentially wide range of related activities aimed at achieving government policy outcomes. A grant program is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a single Department of Veterans' Affairs Portfolio Budget Statement Program. |

⁹ Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

¹⁰ Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

| Term | Definition |
|--|---|
| grantee | the individual/organisation which has been selected to receive a grant. |
| Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS) Program | described within the entity's Portfolio Budget Statement , PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. These high-level PBS programs often comprise a number of lower level, more publicly recognised programs, some of which will be grant Programs. A PBS Program may have more than one grant program associated with it, and each of these may have one or more grant opportunities. |
| selection criteria | comprise both eligibility and assessment criteria. |
| selection process | the method used to select potential grantees. This process may involve comparative assessment of applications or the assessment of applications against the eligibility criteria. |
| Selection Advisory Panel | provides strategic oversight, advice and recommendations to the decision maker on assessed applications from the program specific, service provider composition and service location perspectives. |
| sponsored organisation | <p>the organisation that is being sponsored. For the purposes of BEST grants, this organisation may or may not be incorporated, but it must be a bona fide ESO.</p> <p>Note: a sponsored organisation cannot submit the application in their own right. The application must be submitted by the sponsoring applicant. Both the sponsored organisation and the sponsoring applicant must sign the Letter of Declaration included with the application</p> |
| sponsoring applicant | The sponsoring applicant is the organisation who will submit the application on behalf of the sponsored organisation. For the purposes of BEST grants, this organisation must be incorporated. Both the sponsored organisation and the sponsoring applicant must sign the Letter of Declaration included with the application |
| TIP | <p>Training and Information Program.</p> <p>TIP provided training for Compensation and Welfare advocates prior to the commencement of the ATDP.</p> |

| Term | Definition |
|------------------|--|
| value with money | <p>refers to ‘value with relevant money’ which is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations.</p> <p>When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of the project proposal and activities • fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives • that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government’s outcomes being achieved and • the potential grantee’s relevant experience and performance history. |
| VITA | <p>Veterans’ Indemnity and Training Association Inc.</p> <p>VITA provides access to professional indemnity insurance at an affordable cost for members of ex-service organisations (ESOs) and incorporated groups who provide advice and advocacy services to members of the ex-service community about government pensions, benefits and community support services.</p> |
| VEA | <p><i>Veterans’ Entitlements Act 1986</i></p> |
| VRB | <p>Veterans Review Board.</p> <p>The VRB is a tribunal created by Parliament to review decisions about disability pensions, war widow(er)’s pensions, and attendant allowance under the <i>Veterans’ Entitlements Act 1986</i> (VEA) and rehabilitation, compensation and other benefits under the <i>Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004</i> (MRCA).</p> |

Appendix A: Summary of eligible and ineligible BEST expenses

Salary expenses

Eligible salary expenses only include the base salary component for:

- Administrative assistants – involved in the provision of support for compensation advocates
- Compensation Advocates – may also be known as Pension Officer, Case Officer or Advocate.

Ineligible salary expenses include:

- Salaries for welfare advocates / support officers
- Salary related payments/expenses, including:
 - Honoraria/Volunteer Expenses
 - Work Cover
 - Salary On-costs such as superannuation, leave entitlements, leave loadings.

Equipment and administration expenses

Two categories of administrative expenses are eligible for grants. These categories, and examples of items which fall within these categories, are listed below.

All requested items must clearly address the program objectives in order to be considered eligible for funding.

Equipment expenses

Computer equipment related to compensation and welfare advocacy work.

- Desktop, laptop (each with 3 year warranty), DVD burner, printer, Multi-Function Device (MFD), Fax Machine, scanner, surge protector, computer network equipment.

Computer software:

- Anti-virus and security software annual licence, Microsoft Version Upgrades (with DVA approval), application tools (e.g. MS Office), fire wall software. Note: ESOs are entitled to purchase education versions of software.

Office equipment and office furniture:

- Filing cabinet, desk and chair, meeting table, visitor chairs, bookcase.

Reference material:

- Related reference books and medical information that is available via print and online (e.g. MIMS).

Administration expenses

Internet infrastructure:

- Based on network setup, number of stand-alone PCs, laptops, wireless for laptops being used remotely. Internet modems for Dial Up, Broadband and wireless.

Internet access:

- Establishment fees and ongoing access costs.

Office supplies:

- General stationery, postage, paper, toner, ink, folders, tapes, cleaning products, read/write DVDs, brochure holder, flash drives.

Telephone costs:

- Landline and mobile phone calls related to the provision of pension and welfare services.

Travel:

- Reimbursement for travel, only within the local area for any of the following reasons:
 - pensions
 - welfare and advocacy work
 - travel to nearby VRB and AAT hearings
 - travel to ATDP training courses.
- Travel should be calculated at the rate of 36 cents per kilometre when practitioners use their own motor vehicles (subject to the travel exclusions listed in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines). A travel log detailing the kilometres travelled, purpose of journey, date(s) of travel and attributed costs for each journey will be required.

Ineligible items

You cannot use the grant for the following:

- utility costs covering electricity, gas, water, etc.
- the cost of leasing premises (including rent) or purchase of real property
- council rates
- office expenses and fees including insurance, advertising expenses, audit fees and bank fees
- any travel costs beyond the local district where the organisation operates or has its usual place of business
- legal consultation costs, including litigation
- air conditioning units, televisions or refrigerators.

Appendix B: Explanation of the BEST grant calculation formula

Summary of the funding formula used to calculate grants

A formula is used to calculate BEST grants. The formula is based on the compensation and welfare work that an organisation has undertaken in the most recent calendar year. The formula has been developed to provide a more transparent, equitable, and repeatable way to calculate grants.

In consultation with the ex-service community, this formula is reviewed following each funding round to ensure that it most effectively meet the aims and objectives of the ESO community and the BEST program.

Principles underpinning the formula

Each applicant's recommended grant is based on the volume and complexity of the work it has done as a percentage of the total amount of work undertaken nationally by all applicants.

A maximum of 60% of available BEST funds are allocated to meet applications for salary funds, with the remaining 40% allocated to claims for administrative funds.

An organisation's entire contribution to assisting the veteran community is recognised by taking into account the work done by both paid and volunteer officers.

Grants to support salary are only available for practitioners providing, and supporting, compensation advocacy. Only workload directly related to claims and appeals will be used in the calculation of these salary grants.

Grants for administrative costs (computer equipment, travel costs etc.) will be available for items supporting both compensation AND welfare work. Grants for these items will therefore be calculated based on an organisation's compensation AND welfare workload.

An amount of supplementary administrative funding, up to \$200,000 will be available for eligible organisations whose workload is overwhelmingly welfare based and/or who received welfare salary support in BEST Round 14.

Regardless of workload, an organisation cannot receive a grant in excess of the amount requested for either salary or administrative costs.

Workload ratings

The differences in the complexity of certain types of work, and the variations in the time that needs to be spent on these, is represented by a rating for each relevant type of work. These ratings are as follows:

| Type of Work | Workload Rating | Measure Type |
|---|------------------------|---------------------|
| Welfare Hour | 0.50 | Welfare Work |
| DRCA primary claim | 1.0 | Compensation Work |
| VEA primary claim (includes single or multiple conditions) | 2.0 | |
| MRCA primary claim (includes single or multiple conditions) | 3.0 | |

| Type of Work | Workload Rating | Measure Type |
|--|-----------------|--------------|
| Multi-Act claims (must include MRCA and cannot also be counted as a MRCA, DRCA or VEA claim) | 4.0 | |
| Successful VEA S31 claim (includes single or multiple conditions) | 2.0 | |
| DRCA S62 claims | 3.0 | |
| MRCA Internal Reviews | 3.0 | |
| VRB Appeals | 15.0 | |
| AAT Appeals | 20.0 | |
| Service Pensions | 3.0 | |
| Applications For Increase (AFI) | 1.0 | |

An organisation must undertake at least a minimum amount of work (a workload rating of 30) to be eligible to be offered a grant.

Grant calculation

The recommended amount of an organisation's salary and administrative grant is determined by calculating, in the following order:

- separate workload totals for compensation and welfare activity for each applicant, by multiplying the amount of each type of work done with the workload rating for that type of work
- a total national workload figure for salaries by combining all the individual compensation workloads and a total national workload for administrative support by adding the total welfare workloads to the total compensation workload
- each applicant's percentage of the national total workload for both salaries and administrative support
- the organisation's maximum grant amount by applying this percentage to the available national funds for that grant component (salary or administrative)
- where an organisation has requested less than its maximum grant, excess funds are reallocated across the remaining organisations, this process may need to be repeated a number of times until all funds have been allocated.